

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-10

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 FEA-01 CIAE-00
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-08 NRC-05 OES-07
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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3920
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
USMISSION USUN NY

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VIENNA FOR USMISSION IAEA

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM, CO, IAEA
SUBJ: GOC POSITION ON NPT

REF: A) BOGOTA 8008 (NOTAL); B) BOGOTA 7945; C) STATE 187696

1. SUMMARY. EMBOFFS RENEWED DISCUSSIONS ON NPT RATIFICATION IN LENGTHY, DETAILED TALKS WITH FONOFF OFFICIALS SEPTEMBER 15. COLOMBIANS REMAINED UNCONVINCED, ALTHOUGH AGREEING IN PRINCIPLE TO NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION. WE BELIEVE THAT, UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, FURTHER EFFORTS DURING REMAINING TEN MONTHS OF THIS ADMINISTRATION TO ACHIEVE GOC RATIFICATION OF NPT WOULD BE UNFRUITFUL. THE EMBASSY REQUESTS GUIDANCE REGARDING ADDITIONAL OR ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES THAT COULD BE MADE IN THE AREA OF NON-PROLIFERATION. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING TALKS WITH FONOFF OFFICIALS SEPTEMBER 15, EMBOFFS RENEWED ARGUMENTS FOR GOC RATIFICATION OF NPT. COLOMBIANS WERE REMINDED OF IMPORTANCE OF ISSUE WHICH HAD BEEN RAISED IN BILATERAL BETWEEN PRESIDENTS CARTER AND LOPEZ, AND THAT RATIFICA-
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TION WOULD CREATE FAVORABLE CLIMATE FOR NEGOTIATION OF A NUCLEAR AGREEMENT (REF B). COLOMBIANS REITERATED (REF A) DESIRE TO KEEP NUCLEAR OPTION (WHICH THEY DON'T EXPECT TO USE) OPEN, AND NOTED COLOMBIA'S LIMITED NUCLEAR NEEDS AND ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF NUCLEAR FUEL (VIZ. FRG, USSR). THEY ALSO EMPHASIZED DIFFICULTY GOC WOULD HAVE IN DEFENDING RATIFICATION WHICH THEY DESCRIBED AS "POINT OF NO RETURN."

3. COLOMBIANS WERE VERY VAGUE WHEN PRESSED AS TO THE ORIGIN WITHIN THE GOC OF OPPOSITION TO NPT RATIFICATION AND WERE UNRESPONSIVE TO DIRECT QUESTION OF WHETHER SUCH OPPOSITION CAME FROM CONGRESS OR THE MILITARY. EMBOFFS WERE LEFT WITH IMPRESSION THAT IMMEDIATE OPPOSITION CENTERED IN FON MIN LIEVANO AND PRESIDENT LOPEZ. COLOMBIANS WENT ON TO EXPLAIN THAT ANY POSITION PAPER THE FONOFF MIGHT PREPARE WHICH ADVOCATED RATIFICATION RAISED QUESTIONS WHICH THE FONOFF WAS NOT ABLE TO ANSWER, I.E. WHAT WAS THE ADVANTAGE TO COLOMBIA OF RATIFICATION AT THIS TIME.

4. IN REPLY, EMBOFFS RESTATED ARGUMENTS CONTAINED REF C, WITH PARTICULAR STRESS ON IMPORTANCE OF NPT RATIFICATION AS A CONTRIBUTION TO REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL STABILITY.

5. COLOMBIANS WERE UNMOVED. THEY STATED THAT THE U.S. COULD BEST FOCUS NPT ADHERENCE EFFORTS ON ARGENTINA AND BRAZIL, WHICH THEY SAID WERE THE COUNTRIES THREATENING STABILITY. RETURNING TO THE TLADELCO TREATY, THE COLOMBIANS IMPLIED THAT COLOMBIAN ADHERENCE TO THAT TREATY HAD BEEN ACCOMPLISHED WITHOUT SUFFICIENT STUDY. IN ANY CASE, TLADELCO WOULD BE EASIER TO RENOUNCE THAN NPT. TO LEAVE NPT, THEY SAID, WOULD AMOUNT TO A DECLARATION BY THE GOC THAT IT ANTICIPATED NUCLEAR WAR. THROUGHOUT DISCUSSION COLOMBIANS MADE CLEAR THAT, DESPITE THE DECISION NOT TO SEEK NPT RATIFICATION, GOC REMAINS COMMITTED TO PRINCIPLE OF NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION. THIS DECISION IS CONFIDENTIAL

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BASED NOT ON ANY ANTICIPATION THAT COLOMBIA WOULD OR COULD JOIN THE NUCLEAR CLUB BUT PRIMARILY OUT OF CONCERN THAT NPT RATIFICATION, GIVEN ARGENTINA AND BRAZIL POSITIONS, WOULD NOT BE DEFENSIBLE AGAINST DOMESTIC CRITICS. IF NPT RATIFICATION COULD BE SHOWN TO BE ADVANTAGEOUS FOR COLOMBIA AT SOME FUTURE TIME, THEY SAID, THEN RATIFICATION WOULD BE SOUGHT.

6. EMBOFF HAD EARLIER DISCUSSED NPT WITH COLOMBIAN NUCLEAR AFFAIRS INSTITUTE DIRECTOR ERNESTO VILLAREAL. EMBOFF POINTED OUT THAT NPT RATIFICATION WOULD HELP SET THE RIGHT KIND OF ATMOSPHERE TO ENABLE THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE BILATERAL NUCLEAR AGREEMENT TO MOVE FORWARD ONCE THE NECESSARY LEGISLATION WAS IN PLACE. VILLAREAL AGREED, SAID THAT MINES MINISTER URRUTIA ALSO AGREED, AND THAT URRUTIA HAD SPOKEN TO FON MIN LIEVANO ON SUBJECT. URRUTIA'S IMPRESSION WAS THAT LIEVANO WOULD NOT CHANGE HIS MIND ON NPT RATIFICATION. EMBOFF URGED THAT VILLAREAL AND URRUTIA AGAIN RAISE SUBJECT WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY. IN SEPTEMBER 15 TALKS WITH FONOFF OFFICIALS, THEY CONFIRMED THAT URRUTIA HAD RECOMMENDED NPT RATIFICATION TO LIEVANO BUT THAT LIEVANO REMAINED UNBUDGED.

7. REQUEST FOR GUIDANCE: THERE NOW APPEARS TO BE LITTLE LIKELIHOOD OF OBTAINING A COMMITMENT BY THE GOC TO SEEK NPT

RATIFICATION DURING THE REMAINING TEN MONTHS OF THIS ADMINISTRATION. PENDING NEW DEVELOPMENTS AND IN ORDER TO KEEP GOC'S ATTENTION FOCUSED ON THE ISSUE OF NON-PROLIFERATION, THE EMBASSY REQUESTS GUIDANCE REGARDING NEW OR ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES IN THE NON-PROLIFERATION AREA, NOT NECESSARILY DIRECTED AT NPT RATIFICATION, SUCH AS NEGOTIATION BY THE GOC OF A SAFEGUARDS AGREEMENT.

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